

AVE MARIA!

SISTER THERESA PICKED THIS PRAYER TO BE SUNG AT HER FUNERAL.

“AVE MARIA, GRATIA PLENA, DOMINUS TECUM!”

“HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU!”

ST LUKE RECOUNTS, IN HIS GOSPEL, THAT THIS WAS ELIZABETH'S GREETING TO MARY, BUT IT CAME ONLY AFTER MARY RESPONDED TO GOD'S INVITATION THROUGH THE ANGEL, GABRIEL, WITH HER “FIAT,” LET IT HAPPEN, OR AS THE BEATLES' SANG, “LET IT BE.” LET IT BE DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WILL.

AS THE SISTERS GATHERED AROUND THERESA LAST FRIDAY REPEATING THE WORDS OF THE AVE, THE ROSARY, SISTER THERESA QUIETLY AND PEACEFULLY LEFT US AND WENT HOME.

I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT WITH HER LAST SUNDAY AND MONDAY, BOTH OF US KNOWING THEN, THAT IT WOULD BE THE LAST TIME THAT I WOULD SEE HER ALIVE.

THERESA TOLD ME LAST SUNDAY, “IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ANACONDA, OR ABOUT YOUR ROOTS, ASK NOW, BECAUSE THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.”

SO I ASKED HER ABOUT THE IRISH CAME TO SETTLE IN MONTANA, AND WORK IN THE COPPER INDUSTRY. I WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HER MOM AND DAD, MY GRANDPARENTS, HOW THEY MET, AND ABOUT MY ANCESTORS.

SHE TOLD ME THAT MAGGIE, HER MOTHER, WHEN SHE WAS IN SCHOOL IN IRELAND, WAS KNOWN TO BE THE SMARTEST STUDENT IN CONNEMARA. THE SCHOOL OFFICIALS MADE SURE THAT SHE HAD TO BE THERE FOR ALL DIGNITARIES, WHO MIGHT BE VISITING, BECAUSE SHE COULD BE RELIED ON TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY.

WHEN SHE IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES, HER RELATIVES HERE WANTED HER TO BE A NURSE BECAUSE SHE WAS SO GIFTED. BUT SHE NEEDED TO WORK, BECAUSE SHE HAD NO MONEY. THEN SHE MARRIED JOE MALLOY AND PROCEEDED TO RAISE 6 CHILDREN.

ONE OF HER CHILDREN, THE YOUNGEST, THERESA, HOWEVER, DID FULFILL THE RELATIVES' DREAMS AND BECAME A NURSE.

AFTER WORKING AT ST. ANN'S HOSPITAL IN ANACONDA FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THERESA BECAME THE SCHOOL NURSE FOR ALL OF ANACONDA. SHE WOULD

TRAVEL TO EVERY SCHOOL IN THE ENTIRE DISTRICT TO ATTEND TO THE HEALTH NEEDS AND ISSUES OF ALL THE STUDENTS.

I CAN REMEMBER BEING SO PROUD IN THE THIRD GRADE WHEN MY AUNT CAME TO ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL TO CHECK EVERY STUDENT IN THE SCHOOL FOR RINGWORM. SHE ALSO CHECKED US FOR HEAD LICE, AND ADMINISTERED TB TESTS.

THERESA TRULY LOVED LIFE. SHE COULD "PARTY HEARTY" LONG BEFORE THAT EXPRESSION WAS FASHIONABLE. SHE WAS THE FANCY OF SEVERAL YOUNG MEN IN BUTTE AND ANACONDA. IF THERE WAS A FIRE IN TOWN WHERE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS CALLED OUT, SHE WOULD COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE AND GRAB ME TO GO TO WATCH IT WITH HER. IT WAS NOT THAT OFTEN, BECAUSE ANACONDA WAS NOT THAT BIG OF A TOWN, BUT SHE ENJOYED THE EXCITEMENT.

WHEN SHE WOULD TELL GHOST STORIES, THEY WOULD SOUND CREDIBLE BECAUSE I THINK SHE BELIEVED THEM HERSELF.

EVERYONE WHO KNEW HER THOUGHT SHE HAD IT MADE, THAT SHE HAD IT ALL.

BUT GOD WAS CALLING HER TO SOMETHING GREATER, AND THERESA ANSWERED WITH HER OWN "FIAT."

SHE FELT CALLED TO BE A NUN, BUT NOT THE URSULINES, BENEDICTINES, DOMINICANS, THAT WE WERE FAMILIAR WITH IN ANACONDA, OR EVEN THE SISTERS OF CHARITY WHO STAFFED ST. ANN'S HOSPITAL IN ANACONDA, OR ST. JAMES HOSPITAL ON BUTTE, MONTANA, BUT AN OBSCURE IRISH MISSIONARY ORDER, THE SISTERS OF ST.COLUMBAN.

WE ALL KNOW A FAMOUS MISSIONARY NUN BY THE NAME OF TERESA. THAT IS MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA.

THIS WAS A WOMAN WHO EMBRACED RELIGIOUS LIFE.

SHE LEFT HER HOME, WHICH WAS IN ALBANIA.

SHE TRAVELLED TO A DISTANT AND FOREIGN LAND, INDIA.

SHE MINISTERED TO THE POOREST OF THE POOR--AND FOUND GOD IN ALL OF THEM.

BECAUSE OF THIS, SHE IS NOW ON THE ROAD TO SAINTHOOD.

AS SOON AS THE POPE RECOGNIZES ONE MORE MIRACLE THAT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO HER, SHE WILL BE CANONIZED A SAINT.

BUT, WHAT IS A SAINT? WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN TO US.

TO US AS CATHOLICS, IT REFERS TO ONE WHO IS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD! THAT IS, ONE WHO HAS SHOWN BY THEIR LIFE, THAT WE BELIEVE THAT THEY SEE GOD FACE TO FACE.

THIS MORNING WE REFLECT ON ANOTHER WOMAN BY THE NAME OF THERESA.

SHE JOINED A RELIGIOUS ORDER.

SHE LEFT HOME AND TRAVELLED TO A DISTANT AND FOREIGN LAND, KOREA, TO MINISTER TO NOT ONLY THE POOR, BUT ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE. SHE CONTINUED THIS MINISTRY IN KOREA FOR OVER 30 YRS.

BECAUSE OF HER INFECTIOUS PERSONALITY SHE ATTRACTED AN ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, AND BENEFACTORS.

PEOPLE WHO KNEW HER, OR KNEW OF HER INCREASED THEIR DONATIONS SPECIFICALLY TO THE COLUMBAN MISSIONS, AND EVEN MORE SPECIFICALLY TO THE KOREAN MISSIONS. DOCTORS, MEDICAL CLINICS IN ANACONDA, BUTTE, ALL OVER MONTANA, AND EXTENDING INTO OTHER STATES, WOULD COLLECT PHARMACEUTICALS TO BE SENT TO THE COLUMBAN CLINIC AT CHUNCHON BECAUSE THAT WAS WHERE SISTER THERESA WAS, AND SHE NEEDED THEM IN HER MINISTRY. SHE ALSO INSPIRED ADOPTIONS OF KOREAN ORPHANS,(EVEN IN MY OWN EXTENDED FAMILY).

THERESA WOULD MAKE IT BACK TO THE UNITED STATES SOMEWHAT IRREGULARLY, FOR A SHORT REJUVENATION PERIOD BEFORE RETURNING TO HER WORK IN KOREA.

ONE TIME, AFTER SPENDING 30 YEARS THERE, SHE CAME HOME FOR WHAT SHE THOUGHT WOULD BE A SHORT TIME OF R&R.

HOWEVER, SHE WAS ASKED BY HER CONGREGATION TO STAY IN THE STATES AND DO PROMOTIONAL WORK. THE COLUMBANS, LIKE ALL MISSIONARY ORDERS, WERE DEPENDENT ON DONATIONS TO FUND ALL OF THEIR MISSIONS THE WORLD OVER. THE COLUMBAN SUPERIORS RECOGNIZED THE GIFTS THAT MADE SISTER THERESA PERFECT FOR THIS ROLE. SHE WAS AN AMERICAN, AND WOULD BE SPEAKING TO CHURCHES ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES. SHE WAS A GOOD SPEAKER. SHE WAS WITTY AND FUNNY. PEOPLE WERE NATURALLY ATTRACTED TO HER.

HOWEVER, THIS WAS A GREAT PERSONAL STRUGGLE FOR HER. SHE DID NOT ENTER RELIGIOUS LIFE TO DO PROMOTIONAL WORK. AFTER ALL, SHE WAS A MISSIONARY!

BUT, DESPITE HER INNER CONFLICT, SHE REMEMBERED HER "FIAT" TO GOD, LET IT BE, LET IT HAPPEN TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD.

SO, STEPPING OUT OF HER COMFORT ZONE, SHE STARTED TO EMBRACE HER NEW MINISTRY, WORKING OUT OF CHICAGO FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND THEN LATER COMING HERE TO SILVER CREEK.

HER LOSS, OF COURSE, WAS OUR GAIN.

HER LOSS, GIVING UP THE MISSION FIELDS, WAS OUR GAIN, WE GOT TO SEE HER, SHARE HER, ENJOY HER.

HERE AT SILVER CREEK, SHE CONTINUED TO PUT HER NURSE/ PHARMACIST AREA OF EXPERTISE TO GOOD USE, MINISTERING TO THE RESIDENTS OF ST. COLUMBAN'S RETIREMENT COMMUNITY.

SO MANY TIMES WE WOULD INVITE HER TO COME TO CLEVELAND TO CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS WITH OUR FAMILY, THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS, AND EASTER. BUT, INVARIABLY, SHE WOULD SAY NO, PREFERRING TO STAY HERE AND COVER FOR SOME OTHER MEMBER OF THE STAFF, SO THAT THEY COULD ENJOY THE HOLIDAY WITH THEIR FAMILY.

AS AGE TOOK IT'S TOLL, AND THIS IS AFTER MANY YEARS, THERESA GRADUALLY BEGAN TO SHIFT FROM NURSING TO ANSWERING PHONES EACH EVENING. EVEN THIS SHE SAW AS A MINISTRY, BECAUSE SHE KEPT CONTACT WITH THE RESIDENTS AND STAFF. AND SHE WOULD SPEND THE TIME IN PRAYER FOR EACH OF THEM.

SISTER CORONA PUSHED HER TO KEEP NURSING LICENSE ACTIVE. I CAN RECALL HOW SHE WOULD ROLL HER EYES AT HAVING TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS, BUT ALL OF US KNEW WHAT SISTER CORONA WAS DOING. THERESA WANTED TO DIE WITH HER BOOTS ON, TO SERVE GOD UNTIL THE END. AND SISTER CORONA WAS HELPING HER TO DO IT.

UNTIL THE VERY END SHE FELT THE NEED TO MINISTER TO THE RESIDENTS HERE.

I ASKED HER LAST MONDAY, THE LAST TIME I SAW HER ALIVE, DO YOU NEED OR WANT ANYTHING? ALTHOUGH SHE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE HER ROOM AGAIN, HER RESPONSE TO ME WAS, "YES, A SCOOTER, SO I CAN GO SEE THE RESIDENTS AND NOT BE A BURDEN ON ANYONE ELSE."

SO, WHO WAS THERESA TO US? WHAT MADE HER SO SPECIAL THAT WE WERE DRAWN TO HER SO MAGNETICALLY?

AS I REFLECTED ON THIS I CAME TO THIS REALIZATION.

SHE MADE EVERYONE OF US BETTER!

THROUGH HER EXAMPLE, SHE HAD A WAY TO MAKE ALL OF US RISE ABOVE OUR SHALLOWSNESS AND PETTINESS.

SHE TRULY WAS NON-JUDGMENTAL. I DON'T KNOW IF THIS WAS JUST THERESA'S EXPRESSION, OR IF SHE GOT IT FROM HER MOTHER OR FATHER, OR IF IT HAS IT'S ROOTS IN IRISH FAITH, BUT WHENEVER ANYONE WOULD DISPARAGE SOMEBODY IN FRONT OF HER, THERESA COULD BE COUNTED ON

TO RESPOND WITH, "WELL, HE WAS ALWAYS NICE TO ME. OR SHE WAS ALWAYS NICE TO ME."

SHE FOUND GOD IN EVERYONE.
SHE BROUGHT GOD TO EVERYONE.

WHO WAS HER FAVORITE? I KNOW MANY OF US WOULD LOVE TO CLAIM THAT TITLE, BUT THE REALITY WAS THAT SHE ALWAYS PICKED OUT THE DOWNTRODDEN; THE ONE WHO NEEDED GOD'S LOVE OR FORGIVENESS THE MOST.

I KNOW IN MY OWN FAMILY, SHE ALWAYS REACHED OUT TO THE ONE OR ONES WHO WERE IN THE BIGGEST JAM.

AND WE ARE BETTER BECAUSE HER UNIVERSAL LOVE. AND THE WAY SHE COULD FIND GOD IN OTHERS WAS INFECTIOUS.

ONE WOULD THINK THAT IT WOULD TAKE A STRONG BACKBONE TO BE A MISSIONARY, WITH ALL THE RIGORS AND CHALLENGES.

BUT THERESA TAUGHT US THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT BONE IN OUR BODY IS THE FUNNY BONE!

WHEN I WAS HERE LAST SUNDAY, I WAS TALKING TO SISTER RUTH. I DID NOT REALIZE UNTIL THEN THAT SHE AND THERESA WERE IN THE NOVITIATE TOGETHER IN HYDE PARK. SISTER RUTH WAS TELLING ME HOW THERESA WOULD ALWAYS MAKE HER LAUGH, DRAWING FACES ON PAPER IN FRONT OF SISTER GEMMA, WHEN THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE SERIOUS.

THIS SPIRIT OF PLAYFULNESS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT HER RELIGIOUS LIFE.

NOT MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN MY MOTHER WAS STILL ALIVE, SHE AND SISTER THERESA WERE TALKING WITH AN OLD CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF THEIRS FROM ANACONDA. MOM MENTIONED THAT SHE HAD GROWN SO CLOSE TO THERESA, THAT WHEN SHE PASSED, SHE WANTED TO TAKE THERESA WITH HER. THERESA SMILED AND SAID "NO THANK YOU!"

LAST JULY, WHEN SHE WAS TOLD OF THAT HER KIDNEYS WERE FAILING, AND THAT SHE WOULD NEED TO GO ON DIALYSIS IF SHE WANTED TO LIVE. IT WAS EXPLAINED TO HER, HOWEVER, THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE FACILITIES TO DO IT IN DUNKIRK, AND THAT SHE WOULD HAVE TO GO TO BUFFALO, AND STAY IN AN APARTMENT TO RECEIVE DIALYSIS EVERY COUPLE OF DAYS, SHE SAID, "NO I WANT TO LIVE MY FINAL DAYS WITH MY COMMUNITY." THERE UNSUED A TEARFUL AND EMOTIONAL GOODBYE WITH THE SISTERS, THE STAFF, AND THE RESIDENTS.

A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER. SHE WAS VISITED BY SOME OF MY FAMILY, MY SISTER, MY NIECE, KATIE, HER HUSBAND, AND THEIR SON AND DAUGHTER. THREE YEAR OLD KENNY WHO HAD A CHILD'S DOCTOR KIT, DECIDED TO EXAMINE THERESA, BECAUSE SHE WAS "SICK."
EVER THE GOOD SPORT, THERESA ALLOWED HIM TO CHECK HER OUT. WE STILL TREASURE THE PICTURES OF THERESA, 90 YRS OLD, AND DYING, WITH HER TONGUE OUT, AS HE EXAMINED MOUTH, TEETH, AND THROAT. AFTER LISTENING TO HER HEART WITH HIS STETHOSCOPE, HE PRONOUNCED HER "ALL BETTER."

A FEW YEARS AGO, WE STARTED A FAMILY TRADITION, MORE OF AN INSIDE JOKE. IT WAS BORN OF THE FACT THAT THERESA LIVED SUCH A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE, THAT THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE WE COULD BUY FOR HER. SO, WHENEVER ANY OF US WOULD COME TO SILVER CREEK TO SEE HER, WE WOULD BRING HER A BOTTLE OF PORT, OR A BOTTLE OF BAILEYS IRISH CREAM, OR EVEN A BOTTLE OF JAMESON'S WHISKEY.

WHEN WE ALL GATHERED TO CELEBRATE HER 91ST BIRTHDAY, IT WAS NO EXCEPTION. SHE MIGHT HAVE RECEIVED A BOTTLE OR TWO...OR THREE...OR FOUR.

BUT AS SHE WAS OPENING A GIFT FROM ONE WELLWISHER, AGAIN, THREE YEAR OLD KENNY, BIG EYED, ANNOUNCED, "ANOTHER BOTTLE!"

THERESA, WHO HAD BEEN PLACE INTO HOSPICE AFTER HER DECISION TO FOREGO DIALYSIS, A WEEK LATER TOLD BETH, MY WIFE, "YOU KNOW, IF I DON'T DIE PRETTY SOON I'M GOING TO BE AWFULLY EMBARRASSED!"

EVERY ONE OF US HAVE "THERESA STORIES," AND I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT MANY OF YOU COULD STAND HERE AND ARTICULATE THEM FAR BETTER THAN I EVER COULD.

BUT I AM ALSO REASONABLY CONFIDENT, THAT WHAT IS IN MY HEART IS IN YOUR HEART AS WELL!

THIS TIME OUR LOSS IS SISTER THERESA'S GAIN. AS SHE LEAVES US, SHE GOES HOME TO HER LOVING FATHER.

THERESA HAD GREAT DEVOTION TO THE INFANT OF PRAGUE, AND MANY BELIEVE THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING HER WITH US FOR SO LONG. BUT I BELIEVE EVEN HE SAID, THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU DESERVE TO COME HOME WITH ME.

WE DON'T SAY GOODBYE. WE SAY, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN. THIS IS OUR FAITH. THIS IS WHAT ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL, THAT FR. THOMAS READ IN TODAY'S MASS, REMINDS US.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER GOSPEL PASSAGE THAT ALSO SPEAKS TO US OF THERESA'S LIFE. IT IS MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, CHAPTER 25, VERSES 31, AND FOLLOWING:

JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES: WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES IN HIS GLORY, AND ALL THE ANGELS WITH HIM, HE WILL SIT UPON HIS GLORIOUS THRONE, AND ALL NATIONS WILL BE ASSEMBLED BEFORE HIM. AND HE WILL SEPARATE THEM ONE FROM ANOTHER, AS A SHEPHERD SEPARATES THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS. HE WILL PLACE THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT, AND THE GOATS ON HIS LEFT. THEN THE KING WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS RIGHT, "COME, YOU ARE BLESSED BY MY FATHER. INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK, A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME, NAKED AND YOU CLOTHED ME, ILL AND YOU CARED FOR ME, IN PRISON AND YOU VISITED ME." THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL ANSWER HIM AND SAY, "LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY AND FEED YOU, OR THIRSTY AND GIVE YOU DRINK? WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND WELCOME YOU, OR NAKED AND CLOTHE YOU? WHEN DID WE SEE YOU ILL OR IN PRISON, AND VISIT YOU?" AND THE KING WILL SAY TO THEM IN REPLY, "AMEN, I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THESE LEAST BROTHERS OF MINE, YOU DID IT FOR ME."

By: Bob Lindquist, nephew of Sr. Theresa Marie Malloy
28 January 2016